



# California Veterans Board

*Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor*



## NEWSLETTER

*This newsletter is being published to keep you informed about your California Veterans Board and what they are doing to serve your needs.*

### HIGHLIGHTS OF SEPTEMBER 28-29 CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD MEETING IN LOS ANGELES

- The September Board meeting was held at the New Directions, Inc., a long-term drug and alcohol treatment program, in Los Angeles, which provides food, shelter and rehabilitation to homeless veterans at four locations.
- The Board approved the revision of Policy C-2 Disqualifying Conditions for Admission to a Home. The purpose of this policy is to state the reasons for disqualification for admission to a Veterans Home and to delineate areas of care that are beyond the health care capabilities of Veterans Homes. This policy was revised to address the issue that the State was paying for health care costs for veterans, as well as non-veterans who did not have health insurance to cover their cost for care. This revision will save the State the cost of paying for uninsured residents.
- Outgoing Commander Wayne Parrish was recognized with a plaque for his service as the California State Commander to the American Legion for 2005-2006.
- In a move to consolidate, the Board restructured its current committees as follows: Veterans Services is now chaired by Leo Burke; Legislative is chaired by Randal Bressette; Communications is chaired by Alice Astafan; Veterans Homes is chaired by Colin Shadell; Policies and Procedures is chaired by Vernon Chong; and Administrative is chaired by Jake Alarid.

### HIGHLIGHTS OF OCTOBER 26-27 BOARD MEETING IN CHULA VISTA

- The Chula Vista Veterans Home hosted the meeting and rolled out the red carpet providing a full assortment of pastries, fruit, juice and coffee for all in attendance.
- The Board took a tour of the Chula Vista Veterans Home and was impressed with the morale for both residents and staff, which was extremely high. During the meeting, Chairman Chong extended compliments to the Administrator and his staff for a well-run Home.
- While in Chula Vista, the Board was invited to attend the American Legion's Entertainment Mixer of San Diego District 22, Post 867, where they enjoyed meeting and speaking with many residents of the Veterans Home and American

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#### CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD MEMBERS

**Dr. Vernon Chong**  
*Chairman*

**Randal J. Bressette**  
*Vice Chairman*

**Leo P. Burke**  
*Member*

**Jake Alarid**  
*Member*

**Alice Astafan**  
*Member*

**Colin Shadell**  
*Member*

Legion members.

- Secretary Johnson announced that after receiving considerable input regarding the decision to close the San Diego Cal Vet office, the Department has decided to keep the office in place, with a manager, and look for new space. The preference would be to co-locate the office with other veteran service agencies and to find an office with space for four people. It is also necessary to continue to reduce the overhead expenses for the program in line with recommendations from rating agencies and program consultants but every effort will be made to keep the service at the highest levels so that the Cal Vet program remains strong and viable.
- Congressman Bob Filner attended the October meeting, where he gave the opening remarks. Congressman Filner represents the 51<sup>st</sup> Congressional District. He is a senior Democratic member of the [House Veterans' Affairs Committee](#) and serves on its Subcommittee on Health. Bob also serves on the [Transportation and Infrastructure Committee](#) and is the Ranking Democratic Member on the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation; he also serves on the Subcommittees on Railroads and Aviation. The Congressman updated the group on current issues that effect veterans such as, updating the G.I. Bill, and making the budget for veterans healthcare a mandatory program. He would like to spend more attention on mental health aspects of the veterans needs, as several hundred suicides have occurred by returning vets from Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Senator Denise Ducheny, representing Chula Vista in the California Legislature, also attended the meeting where she briefly addressed and welcomed the attendees.

***THE NEXT MEETING OF THE CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD WILL BE HELD ON DECEMBER 8, 2006 AT THE YOUNTVILLE VETERANS HOME IN YOUNTVILLE.***

*These meetings are opened to the public – plan to attend and meet the Board, and key members of the Department of Veterans Affairs.*

**BOARD HAPPENINGS:**

- On August 23, the Senate confirmed Board Member Randal Bressette.
- The California Veterans Board's Annual Report is available for review online at: [www.cdva.ca.gov/board](http://www.cdva.ca.gov/board).
- Chairman Vernon Chong and Board member Leo Burke represented the Board and attended services for Past Board Chairman George Sinopoli in Fresno. Governor Pat Brown first appointed Mr. Sinopoli to the Veterans Board in 1964. He was also appointed to serve on the Veterans Board by Governors Jerry Brown and Gray Davis. Mr. Sinopoli was a veteran of the United States Army Air Corps from 1942-1945. He was also very active in The American Legion, having served in many capacities, including Department Commander (1977), California State Chairman of the Citizens Flag Alliance, and was also a life member of the AMVETS and the Disabled American Veterans.
- Chairman Chong was invited to sit on the newly formed VetFund, the fundraising arm of the Department of Veterans Affairs, which generates funds for projects to support California veterans. The first major project of the VetFund is the creation of a facility at the Veterans Home in Yountville for returning veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan.

- Member Leo Burke was invited to participate in The American Legion's Limited Commissions Organizational Meeting on October 28-29 in Pomona, as the Department Commander's Special Advisor for the meeting.
- For Veterans Day, Board Member Jake Alarid attended the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Veterans Day Ceremony, at Forest Lawn-Hollywood Hills in Los Angeles. Member Astafan attended a reception for war veterans at the Cypress Gardens in Citrus Heights (a care unit for seniors), Member Randal Bressette attended the Veterans Day Football game at the Rose Bowl and Member Leo Burke participated in the Sacramento Veterans Day Parade. Chairman Chong participated in the VetFund Golf Tournament in Sacramento.

**MISSION STATEMENT:** The California Veterans Board serves as an advocate for Veterans affairs identifying needs and working to ensure and enhance the rights and benefits of California veterans and their dependents.

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Note to editors: This California Veterans Board Newsletter and previous CalVet Board informational documents are available on the Board's website at [www.cdva.ca.gov/board](http://www.cdva.ca.gov/board) and via e-mail from [CalVetBoard@cdva.ca.gov](mailto:CalVetBoard@cdva.ca.gov).